

*Hope for the Heathen:*

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A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN

THE OLD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

BEFORE THE

NEW-YORK MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

At their Annual Meeting, November 7, 1797.

By JOHN M. MASON, A. M.

*Pastor of the Scots Presbyterian Church in the City of New-York,*

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*Handwritten signature*

*At a Meeting of the NEW-YORK MISSIONARY  
SOCIETY, November 8, 1797,*

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

THAT the thanks of the SOCIETY be given  
to the Rev. Mr. MASON for his Sermon preach-  
ed before them last evening, and that he be re-  
quested to furnish a copy for publication.

*Extracted from the Minutes,*

JOHN N. ABEEL, Clerk.

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## HOPE FOR THE HEATHEN.

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ISAIAH XXV. 6, 7.

*The LORD of Hosts—will destroy, in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people; and the vail that is spread over all nations.*

THE exercise of divine mercy towards man is coeval with his need of it. The shock of the fall was hardly felt; Remorse had only begun to prey upon the conscience, and Guilt to rally his terrors, when a hope, as consoling as it was unexpected, dawned from Heaven upon our revolted race. "I will put," said God to the tempter, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."\* In this original promise were included all subsequent revelations concerning the redemption of sinners. The doctrine of MESSIAH's person, of his sacrifice, of his triumph; together with that vast system of prediction which extends from the beginning to the end of time, and all the correspond-

\* Gen. iii. 15.

ing dispensations of the new covenant, are nothing but its regular developement. But this being slow as well as regular, and all flesh corrupting his way, the Lord selected the family of Abraham to be, for ages, both the witnesses of his grace, and the depositaries of his truth. To them were committed his living oracles; to them the ordinances of his worship; to them the symbols and doctrine of the great atonement. Among them he deigned to dwell, and to raise up an illustrious line of prophets, who should direct their faith and hope to Jesus the Saviour. "To him," saith Peter, "give *all* the prophets witness, that, through *his* name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."\*

But though the children of Israel enjoyed these privileges, while other nations were "suffered to walk in their own ways," they were taught that the covenant of peculiarity should one day be abrogated, and be succeeded by a more general and more glorious œconomy.—"In thee, and in thy seed, shall *all* the nations of the earth be blessed,"† was the catholic promise to Abraham their father. As the time of its accomplishment approached, the circle of prophetic vision grew brighter and larger. Later prophets were enabled to explain the enigmas of

\* Acts x. 43.

† Gen 'xii. 3, xxii. 18.

their predecessors, and to speak, with precision and clearness, both of the coming of Messiah, and of the glory that should follow. Isaiah, in particular, appears to have been favoured with the most liberal disclosure of the divine purposes. Born on high, by the revealing Spirit, he sees far beyond the common horizon. The extremes of the earth, and the ages of futurity, are commanded into his view. He sees the "sun of righteousness" ascending the Heavens, and breaking in upon the thick darkness which envelops the globe. He sees the fiends of night stretch their foul wings, and fly from the spreading day. He sees the tabernacle of God descending to dwell among men: His eye rolls ardent over the wondrous scene; his bosom heaves with mighty emotions; and when utterance is granted, he bursts forth in the language of the text, "*In this mountain will the Lord of Hosts destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.*"

The Lord hath not been slack concerning his promise, nor have the words of his servant fallen to the ground. The elementary dispensation of Moses is no more; its shadows have received their substance, and its types their truth, in the person and offices of the "WORD made flesh." Millions of Gentiles, and among them, believers of this assembly, who were once

“afar off, are now brought nigh by the blood  
 “of Chrift,” and are “no more ftrangers and  
 “foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the faints,  
 “and of the houfhould of God.”\*

But though all this hath happened, according to the fcriptures, much is yet required to their complete fulfilment. Many families of the earth are ftill unbleft: Thefe too are referved for the trophies of Emanuel’s grace, and are to be fubjected to his authority, by the fame means which he hath ever employed in converting finners—the gofpel of his crofs. Three topics of difcourfe, not lefs appropriated to the defign of our meeting, than plainly fuggested by the text: For *in this mountain fhall the Lord of Hofis deftroy the face of the covering caft over all people, and the vail that is fpread over all nations.*

I. Many families of the earth are yet unbleft. They are defcribed as deftitute of fpiritual and faving knowledge; an idea obviously conveyed by the figures of a **VAIL**, and a **COVERING**—Darknefs, thick darknefs, enfhrouds their minds, and conceals from them thofe facts and principles which it moft interefts them to know and to improve.

Of the nations thus under a vail we reckon four claffes:

\* Eph. ii. 13, 19.



1. The families which adhere to the "man of sin:"—Enticed by his lying wonders, and given up to strong delusions, they have deviated into the paths of apostacy; they are under the vail of *anti-christian error*.

2. The families of rejected Israel:—Having disowned their Messiah when he came; and being disqualified, by judicial blindness, for discerning the real sense of their scriptures, which testify of him; the vail upon their hearts is the vail of *obstinate unbelief*.

3. The families which embrace the doctrines of Mahommed:—Turned aside after fables, and amusing themselves with the belief of lying vanities, they are under the vail of *gross imposture*.

4. The families which are usually called Pagan:—With no other instruction than the glimmerings of natural reason, and the refracted rays of distant tradition, they are covered with the vail of *deplorable ignorance*.

All these are characterized in the text. But our attention is invited more immediately to those who are without any scriptural revelation. Though true of all, it is of them pre-eminently true, that they are under the double vail of a benighted understanding, and an erring conscience.

God is the source of intellectual light; for he alone is perfect reason. Wisdom in natural things is his gift; much more that wisdom which

is spiritual and divine. Loss of ability to discover the chief good, was at once the just reward, and the native consequence of revolt. For as all spiritual light in the creature beams from the effulgence of the Godhead, whenever sin had intercepted the communion of man with his Maker, the day which shone around him vanished; the gloom of the pit thickened on his soul; and from that accursed hour to this, unless illumined from above, he hath wandered out of the way, and his feet have “stumbled upon the dark mountains.” Does the assertion need proof? Proofs innumerable are furnished by the unhappy Heathen. Of the very God who “breathed into their nostrils the breath of life;” on whose bounty they are continual pensioners; and at whose tribunal they must shortly stand, they are fatally ignorant. The “Heavens may declare his glory, and the firmament shew forth his handy work;”<sup>\*</sup> but the Pagans, unaccustomed to decypher their language, and to study their lessons, do not thence derive, in fact, just and clear perceptions even of “his eternal power and Godhead;” far less of his moral character; less still can they learn that he is the only satisfying portion of rational beings; and least of all, that he is accessible to the rebellious. Those general notices of

<sup>\*</sup> Ps. xix. 1.



his being which have prevailed in all countries and at all times, have never sufficed to direct men aright in their inquiries after him; nor do they now prevent the most foolish, the most extravagant, the most abominable conceptions of his nature, and of his operations.

Mistake in the first principles of religion and of morals, must generate uncertainty in all the subordinate principles of both. The rule of obedience is, therefore, at best, a subject of conjecture. What is the genius, measure, and manner, of acceptable worship? What are the relative duties of society? Wherein they come short? And what shall be the fruit of transgression? few of the Heathen ask, and none can tell. Yet they are under a law of righteousness which saith, "the soul that sinneth shall die." The origin of their wants and woes they are unable to explore. To the demerit and wages of sin they are utter strangers. The consequences of death they are equally unprepared to meet, or to estimate. All beyond the grave is impenetrable obscurity. Their notions of immortality are less a speculation than a dream. When called hence, they plunge into the world of spirits, unconscious of their destiny; and, till that consummation of sorrows, they grope, at a venture, after the path of life; but grope, alas! in vain; "having the understanding dark-

“ened; being alienated from the life of God,  
 “through the ignorance that is in them, because  
 “of the blindness of their heart,”\*

Of this intellectual darkness the inseparable companion is an *erring conscience*.

Although light in the understanding does not, of course, imply moral excellence, yet, without the former, there can be none of the latter. To this it is necessary not only that there be a law of morals, but that it be obeyed from a regard to the authority of the lawgiver. Both the lawgiver and the law must, therefore, be known, or conscience will inevitably go astray. The general sentiment of right and wrong, though sufficient, if violated, to leave men without excuse, will by no means conduct to the proper discharge of duty. The fact is notorious; and a glance at the Heathen world will descry a thousand monuments of it. To those who have the advantage of revelation, no truths appear more simple and luminous, than that there is but one God, and that he only is entitled to religious homage. Yet how dubious, on these points, were the most celebrated Heathen philosophers! how embarrassed their research! how conjectural their opinion! And of that spiritual devotedness which is the life of real religion, they had as little knowledge as the sons of mo-

dern unbelief. If from them we turn to the  
 mass of their contemporaries, or to those who  
 are now in a similar condition, we are startled  
 and shocked to see them "worship and serve  
 "the creature more than the Creator who is  
 "blessed forever."\* One poor idolater bows to  
 "the host of Heaven;" another trembles before  
 an evil spirit—Here, he finds his divinities in  
 birds, and beasts, and reptiles; there, he  
 "changes the glory of the incorruptible God  
 "into an image made like unto corruptible  
 "man,"† and lies prostrate before a deity of  
 stone or of wood, the work of his chissel or his  
 axe. "He heweth him down cedars, and taketh  
 "the cypress and the oak—he burneth part there-  
 "of in the fire; with part thereof he eateth  
 "flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied;—yea,  
 "he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am  
 "warm, I have seen the fire: And the re-  
 "sidue thereof he maketh a god, even his gra-  
 "ven image: he falleth down unto it, and wor-  
 "shippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith,  
 "Deliver me; for thou art my god.—And none  
 "considereth in his heart, neither is their know-  
 "ledge nor understanding to say, I have burnt  
 "part of it in the fire; yea, I have also baked  
 "bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted  
 "flesh, and eaten it; and shall I make the resi-

\* Rom. i. 25.

† Rom. ii. 23.

“due thereof an abomination? shall I fall down  
“to the stock of a tree?”\*

The rites of Paganism are worthy of its creed. Instead of a worship, reasonable, reverend, and pure; it exhibits all the frightful varieties of whatever is absurd, or blasphemous, or obscene. Its effects on individual and social character, are precisely such as we might anticipate. Unrestrained by any just apprehensions of God, of his law, or his government, the most baleful passions domineer in the heart, and the most horrible excesses pollute the life. Moral distinctions confounded; the sense of relative obligation extinguished; crimes the most atrocious perpetrated with deliberation, and upon principle, are, among the Heathen, the result of being “without God.”† If, in the midst of this degradation and these enormities, the thought should occur, “that they who do such things  
“are worthy of death,” a secret horror creeps through the blood; Conscience, the scorpion of guilt, strikes his sting into the bosom; forebodings, equally dark and intolerable, the mysterious presentiment of “judgment to come,” harrow up the soul. Whither, in this extremity, shall they turn for succour? All around them is one dreary waste; the reign of silence and of

\* Isaiah xlv. 14—19.

† Ward's History of the Law of Nations, vol. i. p. 81—85, 104—106.

desolation. No friendly voice is born to the listening ear; no tower of help rises up to the anxious eye. The Comforter, who should comfort their souls, is afar off. They have not heard, like you, of the name of Jesus. They have none to tell them of "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."\* And the termination of their mortal course—O brethren, how tremendous! The Heavens blacken; the tempest roars; the whirlwind rushes by; down pours the torrent; and without a refuge, and without a hope, they are swept away in the ruin of the nations that forget God.

Exposed to this melancholy fate, the Heathen claim our sympathy; and we eagerly ask, Is their doom to such woe irreversibly sealed? Are they shut out, forever, from the divine compassions? No! To the praise of his grace, Jehovah hath thoughts of mercy, rich mercy, towards them. HE WILL DESTROY, saith the prophet, *the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations*—a design, the contemplation of which forms the

## II. Part of discourse.

From the days of eternity, the Father hath given to Messiah "the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for

\* Eph. i. 7.



“his possession.”\* The whole earth, therefore, being included in the covenant-grant, shall be filled with the knowledge, and subdued to the obedience, of Jehovah. On the maxims of carnal wisdom, the fact is, indeed, impossible, and the expectation wild. To extirpate prejudices implanted in infancy, nurtured by habit, confirmed by example, and consecrated by tradition—to enlighten the stupid idolater, and soften the ferocious savage—to persuade men to despise as contemptible, and loathe as abominable, the objects of their respect and veneration—in a word, to change the opinions, the customs, the characters of nations; and unite them in a religion, simple, holy, heavenly—a religion opposed to every vicious principle, and every vicious act—a religion which proscribes all human merit, and prostrates all human pride—This is an undertaking which equally defies the policy and the power of man. And the belief that it shall, at any time, be attended with success, furnishes incessant matter of derision to the philosopher, and of sneer to the witling. Their mistake lies in supposing the God who made them to be as foolish and as feeble as themselves, or as little concerned in the salvation of sinners. But we, according to his promise, look for the interposition of his



arm, by which, however mean the instruments, this prodigious revolution shall be effected with no less ease than certainty. For,

1. He directs the complicated movements of the universe. However confused and contradictory things may appear to our little minds; with him whose "understanding is infinite," there is neither surprise, perplexity, nor chance. "Known unto the Lord are all his works from the beginning of the world."\* Not only are the laws of matter his sovereign will, and their operation his continual agency, but the whole system of intellect is under his control. All the discordant passions, interests, designs, which dash, in eternal collision, the affairs of men; all the activities of superior intelligences, as well the enmity of fiends as the ministry of angels, are combined, in the harmony of providence, to produce the result which he hath ordained; and hither every occurrence irresistibly tends. "He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."† He causeth "the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain."‡ The unpromising situation, therefore, of the Heathen, is no obstacle to Israel's God, and should be none to Israel's faith. Be the mountains of difficulty ever so impassable, at his pre-

\* Acts xv. 18.

† Dan. iv. 35.

‡ Ps. lxxvi. 10.

fence they flee away. Let the "nations rage, and the kingdoms be moved," if he "utter his voice, the earth is melted."\*

2. The glory of Messiah is a chief end of the dispensations of providence.

The vicissitudes of kings and kingdoms, and all the stupendous events which shine in ancient annals, were important chiefly as they served to prepare the way, and to spread the triumphs, of him who was "a light to lighten the Gentiles." For this God gave the learning of the world to Greece, and its empire to Rome. Both contributed to facilitate and extend the victories of the gospel. The same design is prosecuted in the events which, at this moment, astonish the world. If "nation rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom"—if establishments, imposing from their antiquity, and formidable from their strength, be undermined by the progress of opinion, or shattered by violent explosion—if impiety and ambition, and all the infuriate passions, be permitted to take their course; and scenes of desolation and blood, such as history hath not learnt to record, nor imagination to paint, be opened to our view; it is, that God may destroy the dominion of hell by her own chosen legions, and make them subserve the introduction of that kingdom, which is "righte-

“ousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost.” Thus saith his high decree, “I will overturn, overturn, overturn, until HE shall come whose right it is, and I will give it “him.”\*

3. In the scriptures of the prophets, this spiritual revolution, by which the “kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,”† is frequently predicted, and strongly marked. “All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.‡ It shall come to pass; “in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it: “And many people shall go and say, come ye, “and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, “to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will “teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his “paths.”§ So that “from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, “his name shall be great among the Gentiles; “and in every place incense shall be offered unto “his name, and a pure offering.”|| Is there, then, a nation that yet “sit in darkness and the “shadow of death?” for them “light is sown,”

\* Ez. xxi. 27. † Rev. xi. 15. ‡ Ps. xxii. 27. § Is. ii. 23. || Mal. i. 11.

and to them shall "light spring up." Is there a nation "mad upon their idols?" Jehovah shall "furnish all the gods of the earth," and teach their votaries that he is "the God of salvation," and that "there is none beside him." Is there a nation enslaved to superstition, or abused by imposture? He shall "frustrate the tokens of" "the liars, shall make the diviners mad," and convert the bondage of their followers into the liberty of his dear children. "Rejoice, therefore, ye Gentiles, with his people.\* Faithful "is he that hath promised, who also will do "it."†

But here occurs an important query. By what means are these predictions to be fulfilled, and these prospects to be realized? The means are prepared; they are extremely simple; they are in your hands—even *the doctrines of the gospel of peace*. And this is the

III. And last topic which I proposed to discuss—IN THIS MOUNTAIN, saith the prophet, shall the Lord destroy the veil that is spread over all nations.

Mount Zion, to which Isaiah refers, is a figure, most familiar to the scripture, of the Church of Christ. The apostle Paul, addressing believers under the New Testament, says, "Ye are come unto Mount Zion."‡ And the

\* Rom. xv. 10. † 1 Thess. iii. 12. Heb. x. 23. ‡ Heb. xii. 22.

plain sense of the text is, that the Lord will bless the Heathen outcasts, by "causing them " to pass under the bond of his covenant," and to inherit the privileges of his house: and this shall be effected, by diffusing among them the glad tidings of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. "Behold," saith the sure word of prophecy, "behold thou shalt call a nation that " thou knowest not, and nations that knew not " thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord " thy God, and for the Holy one of Israel, for " he hath glorified thee."\*

Our faith on this point will, indeed, provoke the ridicule of a tribe equally vain and licentious, who claim to be the exclusive benefactors of mankind. Rejecting, with opprobrium and insult, the gospel of Christ, they hail, as they speak, a new order of things, and the world is to be regenerated by a reason without conscience, and a philosophy without religion. "No doubt " ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with " you."† But after all the ostentation and clamour of infidels, what reformation has been wrought by *their* doctrines or by *their* spirit? During forty centuries, reason and philosophy had the world almost to themselves. Where did they overthrow the reign of idolatry? From what vice did they reclaim the nations? One

\* Isaiah lv. 5.

† Job xii. 2.



fect of philosophers rose on the ruin of another, to be itself the aggrandizement of a third. But the world lay still in wickedness; its diseases rankled with increasing fury, and struck deeper and deeper their poisonous roots, under the successive treatment of these "physicians of no value." Eighteen centuries more have nearly elapsed since "God manifested in the flesh, put away sin by the sacrifice of himself:" and what has been done in elevating the character, in purifying the morals, in ameliorating the condition of man, that has been done without the aids of his gospel? What countries have the priesthood of unbelief rescued from barbarism? Where have they resisted the influence, or wiped off the shame, of profligacy? Where have they promoted either happiness or virtue in public or in private? Whom have they taught to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly? By their fruits ye shall know them"

How different is the genius, and how different has been the career of the gospel of Christ! When it was promulged to the Heathen, the philosopher pronounced it folly, and stalked disdainfully by the missionary of the cross: yet through the cross did the missionary preach forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting; and lo, the throne of darkness tottered to its fall; the Gentiles "turned from idols to serve the living God." Abandoning, at once,



their prejudices, their delusions, and their lusts they “fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope “set before them.” The face of the world was changed, and the worldling knew not how. No deep speculations, no subtle reasonings, no displays of science, converted the nations. The process was very short, and very simple. Their guilt and their depravity—their certain destruction without pardon and renovation—the grace of God in sending Christ Jesus to die for sinners—his ability to save unto the uttermost—and the freedom of his salvation to the most worthless and vile, are the truths which won the Gentiles to the obedience of Christ. It is this same gospel which, at this hour, turns men “from darkness to light,” and which is destined to “carry the banners of the cross victorious “round the globe.” Those refined moral disquisitions which, under the garb of sermons, expel vital godliness from the church, will never introduce it among the Heathen. Whoever hopes to gain them to the faith, must imitate the Apostle Paul. He must “preach “Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, “and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them “who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, “the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”\* Adapted to every clime of the earth, to every

\* 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

stage of society, and to all descriptions of its members; unveiling their real misery, and bringing near the only remedy; discovering, at once, their wants, and the means of supplying them; and, seconded by the energy of the quickening Spirit, this precious gospel fastens on the conscience, melts the heart, thrills the very bones and marrow, and transforms the most obdurate rebel into a willing subject of Jesus Christ. When the "Lord gives testimony to the word of his grace," it shall have "free course, and be glorified." No darkness too dismal for it to dispel, no prejudices too obstinate to subdue. "Mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds," this very gospel shall force its way through every physical, and every moral difficulty; and in his name and strength, shall its messengers cast down imaginations, and every high thought that lifteth itself up against the obedience of Christ. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and rough places plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."\*

Come then, my brethren, let us ascend the hill of God; and, aided by the torch of the skies, let

\* Isaiah xl. 4, 5.

us look through the surrounding gloom, to the glories that lie beyond. See! an "angel flies  
 " through the midst of Heaven, having the ever-  
 " lasting gospel to preach to every nation, and  
 " kindred, and tongue, and people."\* The  
 standard of SHILOH is reared: his banner waves  
 on high: the great trumpet is blown: the nations  
 hear, and gather unto him. From the east,  
 from the west, from the north, from the south,  
 they press into the kingdom. On the one  
 hand, is the plundering Arab; on the other, the  
 pitiless Savage. Here, are the frozen children  
 of the Pole; there, the fable tribes of Afric;  
 and yonder, the long disinherited Jew steals  
 silently to his Messiah, weeping as he goes.  
 Hark! the din of arms, and the tumult of bat-  
 tle cease; Discord and War retreat back to hell;  
 and again that hymn of Angels is heard below,  
 " Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace,  
 " good-will towards men."† The redeemed of  
 the Lord raise their responsive song, " Now is  
 " come salvation and strength, and the kingdom  
 " of our Lord, and the power of his Christ."‡  
 Brethren, 'tis no illusion; 'tis " the sober cer-  
 " tainty" of truth divine. The zeal of the Lord  
 of Hosts will perform this—HALLELUJAH!

AND NOW, dear brethren, shall not the first  
 sentiment of our hearts be a sentiment of grati-  
 tude for the grace of God manifested unto us?

\* Rev. xii. 6.

† Luke ii. 14.

‡ Rev. xii. 10.

Let it never be forgotten, that we, in our ancestors, were among the perishing outcasts. Yet to us hath the word of salvation been sent. Without the gospel of Jesus, we should this day have been burning incense unto idols: Without the gospel of Jesus, we should have been strangers to that blessed hope which gives to life its best relish, and takes from death both his terrors and his sting. O Christian, Christian, remember, that if thou hast escaped the wrath to come, and art made "an heir of God, and "a fellow heir with Jesus Christ," it is to the praise of sovereign mercy. Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite; and thou mightest have been left, with the Amorites and Hittites, to die in thine iniquity. Yet thou livest; livest unto God; livest for glory; and shalt never come into condemnation, and never taste of the second death.\* Thrice blessed gospel; which "hath brought life and immortality to light!"† Thrice glorious grace, which hath constrained any of us to receive "the truth in "the love thereof." And thrice condescending Saviour, who hath "washed us from our sins in "his own blood, and hath made us kings and "priests unto God and his father."‡

2. Since the Lord hath destroyed the veil that was spread over us, by revealing to us the great

\* John v. 24.

† 2 Tim. i. 10.

‡ Rev. i. 5.

salvation, let all who have hitherto been indifferent about it, be deeply impressed with the duty of embracing it, without delay, and with the sin and danger of neglecting it.

“ It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save the chief of sinners.”\* On the authority of the most high God, that gospel which we preach, tenders to *you*, my brethren, to *every one* of you, a free grant of this Saviour, and, in him, of eternal life: and, suffer me to add with all solemnity, enjoins your acceptance of it at the peril of your souls. This is *his* commandment; this, therefore, is *your* duty, your immediate, your indispensable duty, to believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, that you may be saved. A refusal is the most aggravated crime which you can possibly commit. For it not only approves, with deliberation, all your deeds of rebellion against the God of your mercies, but pours contempt on the riches of his grace, and throws scornfully away the only hope that ever has been, or ever shall be, proposed to guilty men. The experiment, therefore, is not less dangerous than sinful. For if ye reject Christ Jesus, the Lord, “ there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.”† And when Jehovah writeth up the people, he will count that ye

\* 1 Tim. i. 15.

† Heb. x. 26.



“trampled under foot the Son of his love, and  
 “deemed the blood of the covenant wherewith  
 “he was sanctified an unholy thing; and did  
 “despite unto the spirit of grace.”\* Think  
 not that this is a matter of trifling moment.  
 If the gospel, which you hear from day to day;  
 be not the instrument of your conversion to  
 God, it shall be the occasion of your more  
 dreadful condemnation. If not “the favour  
 “of life unto life,” most certainly “the favour  
 “of death unto death.”† The Heathen will rise  
 up in the judgment against you, and will con-  
 demn you; for they never shared your means of  
 salvation. The devils will rise up in the judg-  
 ment against you, and will condemn you; for no  
 Saviour was provided for them; and, therefore,  
 whatever be their crimes, the rejection of a Me-  
 diator’s blood will be none of them. Now, then,  
 “as though God did beseech you by us, we pray  
 “you, in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled unto  
 “God.”‡ O that ye may know, in this your  
 day, the “things that belong to your peace, be-  
 “fore they be hid from your eyes!”

3. In the assurance that Jehovah will destroy,  
 by the prevalence of his gospel, the vail spread  
 over the nations, believers may see how little they  
 have to fear for the existence, or for the tri-  
 umph, of their religion.

\* Hcb. x. 29.

† 2 Cor. ii. 16.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 20.



Infidelity, it is true, prospers; and hath assumed a most effrontful air, and a most imperious tone. Her threats are loud, and her expectations sanguine. But threats as loud have, more than once, been put to shame; and expectations as sanguine, more than once, been blasted. Seventeen centuries ago did the adversaries of the church predict her speedy downfall; but, unlike the prophets of Jehovah, they proved to be the seers of a lie: she hath lived to see their rage perish, their monuments moulder, their names sink into oblivion: and such shall be the issue of her present conflict. She can meet with no assault more furious and formidable than those which she hath a thousand times met and a thousand times foiled. “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early.”\* Therefore, “no weapon that is formed against her shall prosper; and every tongue that riseth in judgment against her, she shall condemn.”† The temporary success of the infidel should, indeed, confirm our faith, because it verifies the scriptures. Our master, Christ, hath told us, that this shall be one of the signs of his approach: “when the son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?‡ Every infidel under Heaven is, then, a witness

\* Ps. xlv. 5.

† Isaiah liv. 17.

‡ Luke xviii. 8.

for Christianity; and carries in his forehead the proclamation that it is divine—Let him enjoy his exultation. Under a control which he can neither elude nor resist, he is really, though ignorantly, working his own destruction, and the aggrandizement of Messiah. His progress shall be arrested, and his boast confounded, whenever he shall have performed the part allotted to him in the “determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” In our patience, therefore, let us possess our souls. What, though Blasphemy display his columns in defiance to the armies of the living God? What, though Disorder spread from pole to pole, and mingle the nations in universal uproar? What, though the foundations be destroyed, their fabrics overturned, and earth quiver under the falling wreck? That Jesus whom we worship, sitteth king forever: He

“Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.”

With all power in heaven and in earth, *he* will bring order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. In the moment of decision he will arise, and plead his own cause. When he appears, in glory, to build up Zion, his enemies shall lick the very dust. The infidel, to his astonishment, will find, that in planting the seeds of unbelief, he was planting laurels for the cross:

and the believer, to his unspeakable joy, that all the trials of the church, and all the tumults of the world, were but preparative to the reign of righteousness “in the ages of peace.”

4. The subject which has this evening occupied our attention, places, in a strong light, both the *obligation* which lies on Christians to evangelize the Heathen, and their *encouragement* to attempt it.

If we count it life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, our bowels must yearn over those who are acquainted with neither. But, it would be more than unkind, and worse than reproachful, were our best sympathies to evaporate in empty words, or empty wishes. We are called not merely to condolence, but to action. A number of the families yet under the vail, are our neighbours. They border on our country; they are accessible to our enterprize. Prompt and spirited measures for introducing among them the gospel of Christ, are our bounden duty.

Our *duty*—because we *have* the means of grace, and they have *not*. The unsearchable riches of Christ have been poured in upon us, while they are languishing in spiritual poverty. They must address themselves for help to *some* more favoured than themselves; and to whom, with a more imperious claim than to *us*? The

very difference of our situation creates us their debtors: the vicinity of our residence doubles the debt. The word and ordinances were bestowed upon us, not only that ourselves might be saved, but that we might minister to the salvation of others. Our possession, therefore, of the glorious gospel, implies, in the very nature of the privilege, an obligation to extend it as far as possible. Freely ye have received, freely ye must give. This is the way in which the gospel ever has been, and ever must be diffused. Though the employment would dignify angels, God hath committed it to men. They who possess the treasure must impart it to others; and these, again, to more; till passing, "in earthen vessels," from people to people, and from clime to clime, it enrich the world. An attempt to monopolize, or, which amounts to the same thing, a refusal to circulate it, is treason against the law of the kingdom. And let it not, my brethren, be our dishonour and our crime, to betray both ingratitude to our Redeemer, and cruelty to our fellow men, by declining to communicate to them the mercies which, through the instrumentality of others, he hath lavished upon us.

With the superiority of our privileges, the genius of our profession conspires to challenge our interference in behalf of the Heathen. As Christians, we profess that the glory of the Lord Jesus is the object most dear to our hearts,

and most worthy of our pursuits. We profess to believe that the redemption of the soul is precious, and that, without the virtue of his blood, it ceaseth forever. Is this a *sincere* profession? Can it at all consist with unwillingness to use every means in our power for diffusing, far and near, the sweet favour of his name? Must not a guilty blush crimson our faces, if we presume to pray “thy kingdom come,” when we are conscious that we have *done* nothing, are *doing* nothing, *endeavour* to do nothing, for the promotion of his kingdom? Do we, in very deed, believe, that there is no salvation in any other; no name given under Heaven whereby sinners can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ, and yet look coolly on, while multitudes of the Heathen are perishing within our reach; nor ever stretch out a hand for their relief? Yes, my brethren, a generous and persevering attempt to proclaim among them the glad tidings of a SAVIOUR, is a tribute to the *decency* of our Christian profession; and it is a tribute which their most afflicting necessities forbid to be deferred any longer.

If you heard of a number of human beings shut out from every sustenance, and falling, in rapid succession, the victims of famine, and knew, at the same time, that vigorous exertion might rescue the survivors, what anxiety would thrill every heart, what eagerness animate every coun-



tenance! How would the hand pour forth its spontaneous benefactions! How speedily would messengers be dispatched with the staff of life! Alas! my brethren, we speak to you of a more terrible famine; "a famine not of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing of the word of the Lord."\* We plead with you not for expiring bodies; it is the spirit, the spirit that dies! To the heart of the Christian be our appeal. Suppose thy bible taken from thee; thy sabbaths blotted from thy days; the mercies of the sanctuary fled; thy father's fellowship denied; thy hopes, "full of immortality," vanished; the shadows of eternal night stretching over thy soul—And if the thought be more intolerable than ten thousand deaths, think of yonder Pagans, without God, and without hope. Ah! while the sentence is on my lips, they are passing, by hundreds, into that world unseen, with no renewing Spirit, and no atoning blood! "Oh that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears,"† that I might weep unceasingly over the mighty ruin!

If any additional argument can be needed to render the proof of our duty, on this point, completely triumphant; that argument is supplied by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he left this world, and went unto the

\* Amos viii. 11.

† Jer. ix. 1.



Father, his parting injunction to his followers was, "Go ye and teach all nations."\* And that the precept is binding upon the whole church to the end of time, the promise of his presence and support most clearly evinces—"Lo, I am with you always, *even unto the end of the world.*" The command, being express and full, leaves no room for evasion. It either obligates *all*, or obligates *none*. If we may be exempted without sin, the exemption must extend to every Christian Society under Heaven; and then the master's commandment would be a nullity, and his promise have neither grace nor meaning. In this matter, therefore, my brethren, we are by no means guiltless. With a single exception,† all denominations of Christians among us have violated their faith to their Lord; and are now chargeable with habitual disrespect to his authority. Instead of hastening, with generous emulation, to the aid of the Heathen, we have gone, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize: we have clamoured for the shibboleths of party, and have been unanimous (ah, shameful unanimity!) in declining, on carnal and frivolous excuses, that work of faith, that labour of love. Now, therefore, thus faith the Lord, consider your ways. If we persist in

\* Mat. xxviii. 19.

† The honour of this exception belongs to the MORAVIAN BRETHREN.

neglecting these Heathen, while we have the means of sending the gospel to them, they shall die in their iniquity; but their blood may be required at our hands.

Let no one object difficulties.\* In a question of plain duty, a believer is not to be deterred by difficulties. THUS SAITH THE LORD, is his warrant: and as long as there is nothing too hard for omnipotence, there is nothing to justify disobedience or demur. Unbelief looks at opposition, and faints. Faith looks at the promise of God, and conquers. In the strength of the promise, worm Jacob threshes the mountains, and beats them small as chaff. It is the way of the Holy one of Israel to order his servants on difficult duty, without shewing them immediately how they are to succeed. Reserving to himself the manner and the praise of their victory, he lays upon them a necessity of trusting his faithfulness; and they never did, and never shall trust it in vain.

But why do I speak of difficulties? The most formidable ones which must be encountered in a mission to the Heathen, have been overcome, and are daily overcome, by the firmness and intrepidity of carnal men. *They* can visit the savage tribes, can cross their rivers, climb their mountains, traverse their forests; can learn

\* See the Note subjoined to the Discourse.

their language, conform to their manners, acquire their confidence; can patiently submit to hunger and cold, fatigue and peril:—For what? To decorate earthly science, or to collect the dust of lucre, or the vapours of fame. They pretend to no divine command; they think of no divine support. Yet we, who talk familiarly of both, turn pale at the mention of those obstacles which they continually surmount. Whence this resoluteness on the one side, and this timidity on the other! The uncourtly truth is, that the men of the world are *in earnest*, and we are *not*. And what must they, what can they conclude from our supineness? Either that our religion is false, or that we do not believe it? How long ere this reproach be wiped away? Duty urges; Misery implores; thousands of precious souls are the depending stake; and not a moment is to be lost. In the work before us, in the immortal work of evangelizing the Heathen, let us rouse each latent energy, and brave opposition like good soldiers of Jesus Christ. And certainly the encouragement is as great as the call is pressing. As far as man, with the lights of prophecy, can judge, the time is not very distant, when God shall arise, and have mercy upon Zion. What mean these dire convulsions? this crash of kingdoms? these torrents of blood? He who can here discover only the shock of human interests, or the mad-

ness of human passions, hath not penetrated beyond secondary and instrumental agencies. From the eminence of scriptural prediction, a humble believer overlooks the mole-hill of worldly politics, and descries the moving power, and the necessary effect, of the machinery of Providence. To him it is evident that Jehovah "shakes the nations," and is shaking them, that "the desire of all nations may come." And hence his faith derives an establishment, and his hope an elevation, which earth is as unable to destroy as to create. Impending calamity, then, should stimulate, and not dishearten, the disciples of Jesus. The walls of Jerusalem are commonly built in troublous times. Nor hath the career of the gospel been ever more ample and brilliant, than in the days which were memorable for "distress of nations, "with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear; and "looking after those things which were coming "upon the earth."\* In these circumstances of disaster and dismay, the people of God are charged to look up, and lift up their heads, because their redemption draweth nigh, and the Son of Man is coming with great power and glory. If these are, in any degree, the signs of the times, then, *now* is the time for the armies of Israel to gird every man his sword on his thigh, and follow David, his king, to conquest and glory.

\* Luke xxi. 25, 26.

If from the sphere of politics we turn to that of religion, we shall behold events which ought to convert every doubt into proof, and every wish into a vow. While the spirit of discord rages in the world, the spirit of union and of love descends upon the church. Beyond the waters of the Atlantic, our brethren in the faith and patience of Jesus, rejoice in his most benignant influences. Astonishing spectacle! The spell of party is broken; the antipathies of the cradle expire; the strife of ages ceases; and a sweeter harmony of heart and of measures, among Christians of different name, is produced in an hour, than has been granted to the intreaties, the labours, the prayers, of the best of men, for centuries together!

Do you demand the cause of this gracious unanimity? It is the doing of the Lord. Its object? It is the extension of the Mediator's kingdom. Its fruits? They are, already, embassies of peace to the Heathen. Great is the company who have gone forth, with primitive zeal, to publish the word of life. The probability is that Christ crucified, that Christ whom our souls love, is, at this moment, preached to the barbarians of the southern seas; and that an evangelical mission is on its way to the interior of Africa! Ye servants of the most high God, who shew unto the Gentiles the way of salvation, all hail! May the Breaker go up before you;



even Jehovah on the head of you; may he cheer you with his presence, fill you with his Spirit, clothe you with his blessing! And what more auspicious omen can we, my brethren, desire? When the work is actually begun; when it has received the most unequivocal tokens of divine approbation, shall we still linger, and tempt the Lord by asking any further signs? To him who is not blind, the finger of his providence points; to him who is not deaf, the voice of his providence calls. Incitement of a more imperious kind would encroach on the province of miracle.

- If to these encouragements we add the promise of our master in Heaven, Reluctance will be cut off from her last retreat. He hath said, that he will be with his people in their attempts to teach the nations. If, on a design so truly Christian, we go in *his* name, and in *his* strength, we have a *right* to expect his aid; nor is it possible that he should abandon us, or put us to shame. He hath bound himself, by the oath of his covenant, to beat down opposition before those who, obedient to his authority, constrained by his love, and confiding in his truth, enter upon arduous duty; and the glory of his crown is staked on the issue. With the Lord of Hosts on our side, whom or what shall we fear? To him all difficulties are alike. At his command the treasures of the earthling shall flow in the service of the

cross; and hundreds shall arise to solicit, as an enviable distinction, the office of a gospel-herald to the savages. Clad in the armour of the sanctuary, and conducted by the "Captain of salvation," they shall go forth "conquering and to conquer." Ere his promise fail, the mountains shall sink, the vallies rise, the rivers be driven back to their sources, and Ocean again divide his waters. Who, then, are on the Lord's side? Who prefer the salvation of men above their chiefest joy? Who burn to hide the dishonour of the past in the glory of the future, and aspire to the dignity of being fellow workers with God? Let them, with one heart and one soul, in the faith of the gospel, in the good will of brethren, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, forthwith pledge themselves to each other, to those apostolical believers beyond the sea, to the Heathen, who are perishing for lack of vision, that they will unite their efforts to fill the dark places of the land with the light of God's salvation. Should we succeed in the conversion of a single Pagan, the acquisition would infinitely repay our expenditure and our toil. For our Lord himself hath pronounced the whole world, in comparison with *one soul*, to be a thing of nought. But O, my brethren, who shall count the number, or define the extent, or limit the duration, of those blessings which *our* exertions may be instrumental in imparting to the Heathen!

Who shall stop the river of life in its course through their parched soil? Most transporting thought! that thousands of believers whom we shall never see in the flesh; and tens of thousands, who shall come into being when we are gathered unto our fathers, may trace their knowledge of the Saviour to the execution of that plan in virtue of which I address you this evening! and that its magnificent result may never be fully disclosed, till the mystery of providence be finished, the election of grace brought in, and the shout of final redemption thunder through the temple of God!

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## NOTE to Page 34.

AN objection to missions among the Indians, or other savages, which many view as unanswerable, is, "that some considerable progress in civilization is previously necessary to prepare a people for the reception of Christianity. You must first make them men, say the patrons of this opinion, before you make them Christians. You must teach them to live in fixed habitations, to associate in villages, to cultivate the soil, and then you may hope that they will hear and understand when you unfold the sublime principles of the gospel."\*

Plausible and popular as this objection is, it is equally unsupported by reason, by scripture, or by fact.

If the gospel cannot succeed among the Indians, for example, the obstacle must be either in their understandings or in their manner of life.

The former opinion "supposes a wider difference between the understanding of the man of the woods and the man of the city, than what does, in fact, take place. The human mind is not, in any country, below the reach of discipline and religious instruction. The American Indian, the Pacific Islander, and the African negro, are shrewd men, whose intellectual capacity will not suffer in comparison with the uneducated classes of people on the continent of Europe."† Why should it, since it is culture, and that alone, which destroys the level of abilities naturally equal? Surely the Indian, whose necessities compel him not only to hunt and fish for his subsistence, but to be, in a great measure, his own artificer, as well as the guardian of his private and public right, must be superior, in point of general understanding, to those vast bodies of Europeans whose intelligence the division of labour has confined to a detached article of manufacture, or to the merely servile operations of agriculture. Indeed, all the national transactions with the Indians shew them to possess great acuteness, and no small share of

\* Dr. Hardy's (of Edinburgh) Sermon before the Society, in Scotland, for propagating Religious Knowledge, p. 14.

† *Ib.* p. 15.

what learning cannot bestow—common sense. How seldom will you find, I do not say among the vulgar, but among the polished orders of society, better specimens of well-formed idea, and of genuine eloquence, than are frequent in the Indian talks?

If, on the other hand, their manner of life be considered as presenting the decisive obstacle, this opinion supposes it much more difficult to alter outward habits than inward principles. Christians will not dispute that the gospel can and does transform both the heart and the character; yet it is thought unable to overcome a propensity to wandering from place to place. The plain meaning of the objection, therefore, is this, that some means *more powerful than the gospel*, must be applied to civilize the Indians, and prepare them for its reception. For if it be admitted, that the gospel can civilize as well as save, the objection falls at once to the ground. But if its power to civilize be denied, while its power to save is admitted, it becomes the objectors to shew the reason of this distinction; and also, what those more effectual means of civilization are. Be they what they may, since the gospel is excluded, they must be merely human; and then the principle of the objection turns out to be this, that the wisdom of man is better adapted to civilize the Indians, than the wisdom of God.

Further; the objection supposes that savages are to be civilized without any religious aid. For whatever arguments prove the utility, in this matter, of religion at all, conclude, with tenfold energy, in favour of the religion of Christ. But to neglect the religious principle, would be to neglect the most potent auxiliary which can be employed in managing human nature; and to act in the spirit of that wise philosophy which would erect civil society upon the basis of Atheism.

It would swell this note into a dissertation, to state the various considerations which militate against the idea of civilizing the Indians before we attempt to christianize them. But granting this, for a moment, to be necessary, who shall effect it? Philosophers? Merchants? Politicians? If we wait for them, the sun will expend his last light, and the business be unfinished. The Indians have had intercourse with the whites, in the concerns of trade and policy, nearly two hundred years, and most of them are as wild as ever. To put off evangelical missions to them, till, in the ordinary course of things, they become civilized, is, therefore, equivalent to putting them off forever.

2. If the opinion that the gospel can succeed only among civilized people, receives little countenance from reason, it receives less from scripture.



No such restriction of its influence is contemplated in prophecy. Its universal reception is the subject of numberless predictions; but they contain not a hint that the want of civilization shall be such a bar to its progress as is commonly imagined. On the contrary, it is expressly declared, that the most roving and untutored tribes shall rejoice in Messiah's salvation, even while they retain their unpolished characters and manners. "Sing unto the Lord a new song—Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages\* that Kedar doth inhabit—Let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout from the top of the mountains."† Beyond all controversy, the general sense of the prophet, in the words of that elegant scholar, Bishop Lowth, is, that "the most uncultivated countries, and the most rude and uncivilized people, shall confess and celebrate, with thanksgiving, the blessing of the knowledge of God graciously imparted to them."‡ And he particularizes, as an example, those wild Arabs, who, in every point of comparison, were as inaccessible to the gospel as the American Indians.

No such restriction was thought of by the Apostle Paul. He was a debtor not more to the Greeks than to the barbarians.§ He maintains, that in the body of Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." A position which evidently assumes, that barbarians or Scythians might be Christians no less than Jews or Greeks, bondmen or free.

No such restriction is to be found in the commission which the Lord Jesus hath left his church. Thus it runs, "Go and teach *all nations*—Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*," manifestly, every human creature, for such only are objects of the gospel-salvation. Not a syllable about civilization. And, unless it can be proved, that Indians, and other savages, are neither nations nor human creatures; or, if they are, that they are in no part of the world, the prejudice we are combatting must be abandoned as in direct opposition to the will and the commandment of Christ.

Such a restriction, moreover, effaces the chief character and glory of the gospel, viz. that "it is the *power of God* to salvation." Were it what many take it to be, a system of mere moral suasion, of cool, philosophic argument, the case would be different, and the prejudice just. Indians and Hottentots are, indeed, rather rough mate-

\* Or tents.

† *Isaiab* xlii. 10, 11.

‡ *Translation of Isaiab. Notes*, p. 198, 4th.

§ *Rom.* i. 14. *Col.* iii. 11.

rials for a religion cantly stiled *rational*. But whoever knows any thing of *real* Christianity, knows that the conversion of a sinner is the exclusive work of JEHOVAH the SPIRIT. It is this principle, and this alone, which makes the preaching of the word to men "dead in trespasses and sins," a *reasonable* service. Now, to say that the gospel *cannot* succeed among a people not previously civilized, is to say, either that it is *not* the power of God, or 'that there are some things too hard for omnipotence.

3. This opinion, dissonant from reason and scripture, is also contrary to fact.

Was the world universally civilized when Christianity was promulged? or did it prosper only in civilized countries? What were the ancient Getulæ, in Africa? the Sarmatians and Scythians, in Europe? If we can credit history, they were as remote from civilization as the American Indians. Yet, among these, and other nations equally uncultivated and savage, had the gospel, in the time of Tertullian, established its reign.\* And in Britain it penetrated into those places which Roman arts and arms had never been able to reach.†

This general assertion might be amplified in an interesting detail, and might receive additional force from the sanctions of modern history. But either would protract, to an immoderate length, a note already too long. We may, however, ask, why the gospel should be unequal to the effects which it formerly produced, and of which its friends made their just and unanswerable boast? Let us fairly risk the experiment, whether the cross of Christ has lost its influence on barbarian minds. Instead of waiting till civilization fit our Indian neighbours for the gospel, let us try whether the gospel will not be the most successful means of civilizing them. The grace of the Lord Jesus will do what philosophy and the arts will never do—tame the wild heart: and there is no doubt of a corresponding alteration in the conduct. One Christian institution alone, the holy Sabbath, will go farther to civilize them in a year, than all human expedients in a century. Driven continually before an extending frontier; their manners debauched by the commerce of unprincipled whites; their numbers diminishing by war and by vice; the only alternative which seems to be offered them is, conversion or extermination.

\* *Tertull. adversus Judæos, cap. vii. opp. p. 189. ed. Rigaltii.*

† *Inaccessa Romanis loca. Id. ib.* A number of testimonies to the same facts are collected in that learned work of Grotius, *de veritate Religionis Christianæ, opp. tom. iii. p. 46, 47. Fol. Lond. 1679.*

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## APPENDIX.

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### REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

OF THE

### *MISSIONARY SOCIETY.*

AFTER the organization of the Society, the first care of the Directors was to aim at laying a broad and solid basis of future operations. The frontier of the states, and the Indian country, exhibiting an extensive field of missionary efforts, required great attention, while they presented considerable difficulty. That a plan of missions might be devised with judgment, and executed with success, it was necessary to obtain correct information of both. A committee of inquiry was accordingly appointed for each of these purposes, and directed to prepare their reports as speedily as the nature of their business would admit. No printed documents supplying them with sufficient materials, they were obliged to have recourse to individuals scattered throughout the country, and many of them difficult of access. From these and other impediments, the committees have not yet been able to accomplish their object.

A correspondence has also been opened with the leading Missionary Societies in Britain; but no communications from them have hitherto been received.

An institution so novel in this country, and so much beyond the ordinary habits of religious enterprize as the

present Missionary Society, could hardly expect to enjoy immediate and universal support. Yet it is not without peculiar satisfaction, that the Directors find, that in proportion as it is understood, it recommends itself to the approbation and affection of Christians of different denominations. Respectable additions have been made to the number of members; and both congregations and individuals have evinced their anxiety for its prosperity, by liberal and unsolicited donations to its treasury. The funds amount, at present, exclusive of all charges, to nearly one thousand dollars; which, though a small sum for any weighty undertaking, deserves to be viewed as an encouraging commencement.

The Directors have thought themselves warranted, even by existing circumstances and prospects, to appoint a committee to prepare, at their leisure, a set of instructions for Missionaries, and to look out for persons proper to be employed in the service of the Society. They are not without pleasing hopes, that the head of the church will raise up, from time to time, candidates endowed with a missionary spirit, who will glow with zeal for the salvation of the heathen, and count it a distinguished honour to carry among them the sweet favour of his name.

Inquiry has already been addressed to them, to ascertain whether it comes within the design of the Society to educate pious and promising youth expressly for missionary labours. No office would be more gratifying to them, as they are persuaded that nothing can be more congenial to the end of the Society, nor to the wishes of its members.

The Directors feel a peculiar satisfaction in observing, that the missionary principle is not confined to their own association. It hath penetrated to the distant parts of

the state, and produced, some months since, another Society, founded on the same doctrines, devoted to the same objects, and desirous of co-operating in the same plan, by the style of "The Northern Missionary Society in the State of New-York." Articles of union, between that institution and the New-York Missionary Society, have been proposed, and acceded to by the Directors, and will be laid before the Society for final ratification. They cannot but indulge the consoling thought, that the Spirit of the Highest hath begun the good work, and that he will carry it on till his people throughout these States shall combine their counsels, and consolidate their strength, in one grand and triumphant exertion to introduce his Gospel into the "dark places" of the earth, which are yet full of the habitations of "cruelty."

It is to them a spring of no common elevation to learn, that the zeal for missions in the island of Great-Britain, which first suggested the idea of Missionary Societies here, is so far from declining, that it gathers vigour with its age. Obloquy only serves to cement its friends, and opposition to call forth its energies. And the probability, in which every gracious heart must rejoice, is, that at this moment Christ crucified is preached among the Pagans in the islands of the Pacific Ocean. Besides which, an evangelical mission is projected, and before now, perhaps, executed, into the interior of Africa. The Lord bless them, and keep them! Grant Christians here to emulate, and even surpass their apostolic example; and crown every embassy to the Gentiles with greater and greater success, till the whole earth be filled with his glory!

JOHN M. MASON, *Sec'ry.*

*New-York, Nov. 6, 1797.*



IN their proceedings on the above report, the Society resolved, That the education of proper persons to be sent out as Missionaries comes within their design: and it will, no doubt, receive their particular attention as soon as their funds will permit.

The Society also agreed upon articles of union, and principles of co-operation, with the Northern Missionary Society in the State of New-York, to take effect whenever they shall be ratified by said Society.

The objects contemplated by the Society involving heavy expences, and requiring the united exertions of its friends, it was judged necessary to solicit, from all the congregations throughout the country, with which it has any connection, annual collections for its funds. Little can be done in pecuniary efforts, unless those who long for the prosperity of Zion shall give their cheerful and persevering aid; and from such aid, with the blessing of Zion's King, the happiest success may be rationally anticipated.

The Society having agreed that two sermons shall be preached at their next annual meeting, the Reverend Dr. LIVINGSTON, and the Reverend Dr. M<sup>c</sup>KNIGHT, were appointed to preach them: the former in the Scots Presbyterian Church, on the evening of the first day of their meeting; and the latter in the North Dutch Church, on the evening following.

The Society having transacted their business, with the harmony and affection of Christian brethren, and filled with pleasing hope, that their labours shall not be in vain in the Lord, adjourned till the first Tuesday of November, 1798.

*State of the Funds of the Missionary Society, on  
Wednesday, November 8, 1797.*

	<i>Dols. Cts.</i>
Received, on 7th and 8th November, from Members, on account of dues, . . . . .	142 77
By sales of the Society's Address, . . . . .	2 25
The Collection after the annual Sermon, . . . . .	353 66
Balance from the late Treasurer, . . . . .	943 78*

OUTSTANDING, viz.

Due by Members for Entrances last year, as it stands on the late Treasurer's Books, . . . . .	12 50
Due by elected Members who have not yet signed the Constitution, . . . . .	90
Due by Subscribers in Arrears for annual Dues not yet collected, . . . . .	129 50

232

Sixteen hundred and seventy-four dollars forty-six cents. 1674 46

N. B. The annual dues not yet collected are estimated at the lowest sum to which the Constitution limits the Members, that is, two dollars: the amount of receipts will probably exceed the estimate.

\* *The sum referred to in the report of the Directors.*

*Officers and other Directors for the ensuing Year.*

OFFICERS.

JOHN RODGERS, D. D.	<i>President.</i>
WILLIAM LINN, D. D.	<i>Vice-President.</i>
Mr. DIVIE BETHUNE,	<i>Treasurer.</i>
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